



Community Jobs Forum: Host and Moderator Guide

Suggestions and guidance for those choosing to hold a community jobs forum

I. OVERVIEW AND GOALS

On December 3rd, the President hosted a discussion to explore every possible avenue for job creation, and the White House is also asking for input from across the country to identify opportunities and obstacles on the ground. Thank you for volunteering to host and/or moderate a Community Jobs Forum to help in that effort.

At your Community Jobs Forum, the moderator's goals should be to:

- A. Engage in discussions with friends and neighbors about jobs in the local economy and draft one submission identifying the various ideas and perspectives from the participants. This will help the White House flesh out key issues around what is happening on the ground across the country in the economy.
- B. Develop the submission through a process that respects, empowers, and engages all attendees.
- C. Identify particularly poignant stories about what is working, what is not, and what the opportunities and obstacles are for job creation in your community.

II. THE MODERATOR'S ROLE

The moderator's role is: 1) to organize the meeting, 2) to help moderate the meeting (or find someone to serve that role) and 3) ensure that the ideas and issues brought up in the discussion are relayed to the White House. These discussions should last an hour to an hour and a half. The moderator should not strongly advocate for specific economic policy. Instead, the moderator's role is to listen, facilitate discussion that elicits the views of all attendees, and help the participants draft a submission to the White House. In addition, please identify the most compelling stories that illustrate opportunities and obstacles for job creation in our country.

A. Before the Community Jobs Forum:

Step 1: Invite Friends, Family, Neighbors, and Colleagues:

- Invitations: The moderator should call friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors to invite them to the Community Jobs Forum. Creating event flyers and posting them at the local coffee shop, grocery store, or library is also an option. The moderator should aim to invite at least 15-20 people to your event, although smaller gatherings are of course fine as well.



- RSVPs: The moderator should encourage all attendees to RSVP for the event in order to know how many people to expect, and should remind attendees of the date and time of the Community Jobs Forum right before the event.
- Identify a note-taker: Either the moderator or somebody the moderator identifies should take notes about the ideas presented during the discussion on the attached form as the forum progresses. At the end of the forum, participants can review the notes to guide the feedback given to the White House.

Step 2: Get your Materials in Order:

- Meeting Agenda: The moderator should create a meeting agenda to help your forum run smoothly, and print out copies for attendees. Find a broad sample agenda below:
 1. Welcome and Introductions of Attendees
 2. Description of event
 3. Explanation of Procedures for Meeting (i.e. Ground Rules to Ensure Orderly Discussion)
 4. Discussion Questions
 5. Finalizing of Group Submission for the White House
 6. Group Photo (If Possible)
 7. Wrap Up and Thank You

Guide for all attendees.

- Paper and Pens: The moderator should make sure to have pens and paper available for attendees to take notes.
- Documentation of the Event: The moderator may want to have camera on hand to take photos and share them with the White House after the event.

B. During the Community Jobs Forum:

Introduction of Attendees: The moderator should welcome everyone to the Community Jobs Forum, introduce him/herself, and lead introductions. The moderator could encourage everyone to briefly say why they are attending the discussion, and make clear that the forum will be better if every attendant contributes and participates.

Description of Event: The moderator should give a short description of the purpose of the Community Jobs Forum, here are some sample talking points:

- On December 3rd, the President held a major forum on job creation in Washington, with a trip to Allentown, PA to get an even better sense of what is happening on the ground.



- These Community Jobs Forums are part of that effort, asking Americans all across the country to take stock of what's working and what's not, what the opportunities and obstacles are to job creation in their communities. So that's what we're here to do.
- The White House will be reading through our feedback and working it into an official report for the President at the end of the process later in December, and they'll also be responding to what they hear on their website.

Explanation of Moderator's Role: At this point, the moderator should start leading the discussion. The moderator should explain his/her role: the moderator will listen, facilitate discussion, and answer any questions on the process. The moderator should not tell the attendees what to do or dominate the discussion.

Preparation for Discussion: The moderator should pass out the form listing the core questions. Attendees should take 5-10 minutes reading the document. The group should then select a note -taker if not already selected.

Discussion: Use the discussion questions to guide the conversation. Try to make sure that each attendee has a chance to give input and contribute to what will eventually be submitted to the White House. Help the group get past any obstacles.

Finalize the Submission to the White House: The group can have the note-taker draft its submission to the White House as the discussion goes along or right afterwards. Brevity and plain language are encouraged. As stated on the questions form, the final report can be submitted via WhiteHouse.gov/CommunityJobFeedback. Please do not submit anyone else's personal information such as names, email addresses or phone numbers.

Closing: The moderator should thank everyone for their participation, and note the White House's appreciation for their input.

Process for a Large Meeting (more than 25 participants): For a larger meeting, the group may break out into smaller groups of no more than 15-20 people. If there is only one moderator at a large meeting, the moderator should make sure that each small group selects a facilitator in addition to a note-taker. The lead moderator can rotate among the groups, providing help to each group where appropriate.

General Best Practices: Forums of this kind tend to work best when all participants are respected, and have equal opportunity to provide their input.

C. After the Community Jobs Forum:

The moderator should submit the group's Community Jobs Forum feedback, and a photo if your group chooses, via WhiteHouse.gov/CommunityJobFeedback.



III. Discussion Questions

For reference, below are the discussion questions listed on the form, which can be distributed to participants and which should guide your feedback for the White House:

1. From what you have seen, or seen reported about the President's Jobs Forum on December 3rd, and the administration's approach to job creation overall, what seems relevant to your community?
2. What parts of your local economy are working or thriving? What businesses and sectors are expanding and hiring?
3. What parts of your local economy are not working or thriving? What businesses and sectors have been hit the hardest? What are people struggling with the most?
4. What are the opportunities for growth in your community? What businesses and sectors seem poised to rebound? What do you see as the "jobs of the future"?
5. What are the obstacles to job creation in your community? What could make local businesses more likely to start hiring?
6. What other issues and ideas should the President consider?

Thank you for your participation.